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**THE MANIPULATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN GUERRILLA  
WARFARE: CAN IT ENHANCE U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES  
GUERRILLA WARFARE OPERATIONS?**

BY

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## ABSTRACT

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The use of integrated, focused behavior manipulation principles and techniques may greatly enhance the success of guerrilla warfare.

Proper integration of psychological communications to manipulate behavior in guerrilla warfare may facilitate the recruiting, motivation, morale, sustainment and popular support for a guerrilla movement and its cause.

This study examines the application of selected behavior manipulation principles and techniques to improve the effects of symbology, war names, recruiting, motivation, and morale sustaining techniques in the conduct of guerrilla warfare.

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**The Manipulation Of Human Behavior In Guerrilla Warfare: Can  
It Enhance U.S. Army Special Forces Guerrilla Warfare  
Operations?**

Psychology has always played a critical role in the conduct of warfare. Sun Tzu's essays describe the psychological techniques that were used to attack the mind and spirit of his enemies as early as 500 B.C. His soldiers beat drums at night to harass those under siege.<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu realized that a precondition to battle was to attack the mind of his enemy:<sup>2</sup>

For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill.

To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.<sup>3</sup>

Genghis Khan, the Mongolian General Temujin, spread distressing rumors in ancient wars to demoralize his opponents. His propaganda convinced his adversaries of his fierceness in battle and his superior numbers.<sup>4</sup>

Similar psychological principles remain relevant today for effective leadership in the conduct of guerrilla warfare. The human opponent and the populace should be

considered the priority objective in a guerrilla war; the human mind remains the most vulnerable target.<sup>5</sup>

A leader's ability to influence his soldiers in ancient times was based on his direct physical access to his soldiers: they saw and heard him all the time. Guerrilla warfare is still conducted by means of face-to-face communications. A leader's physical presence is just as valid today as it was in Sun Tzu's era. So effective leaders must comprehend the social, cultural, racial, political, and mental processes of his soldiers or people. These psychological considerations cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas. Even so, a leader's success depends largely on his knowledge and skillful use of such nebulous insights.

This paper argues that the integration of human behavior communication techniques in the conduct of guerrilla warfare leads to more effective and successful execution of guerrilla warfare. The study of human behavior and their application in guerrilla warfare enhance a leader's effectiveness in organizing and motivating a guerrilla force. Hence, application of the psychological principles and techniques described herein can act as an

effective combat multiplier in the conduct of guerrilla warfare.

Limited applications of similar psychological techniques have significantly contributed to the success of earlier guerrilla leaders. Once human behavior in guerrilla warfare is understood and treated as a potential military asset, human behavior can be manipulated to serve as a combat multiplier.

This study reviews a U.S. sponsored guerrilla warfare activity supported by U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Forces as a sub-mission of Unconventional Warfare. The author participated in operations URGENT FURY in Grenada, DESERT SHIELD/STORM in Turkey, PROVIDE COMFORT I in Turkey and Northern Iraq, and RESTORE DEMOCRACY in Haiti. He has thus had the close operational experience of some of the principles and techniques described in this study. The full spectrum of operational and strategic psychological operations are not discussed in depth. Rather, this study focuses on the human aspect of behavior in the conduct of guerrilla warfare.

### **Unconventional Warfare (UW)**

UW may be conducted across a wide spectrum of military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held or politically sensitive territory. It includes, but is not limited to, the interrelated activities of guerrilla warfare: evasion and escape, sabotage, subversion, and other low visibility, clandestine, or covert operations. These operations may be conducted unilaterally or collectively by predominately indigenous personnel. Within US Army SF, operational detachments serve as advisors to conduct guerrilla warfare as part of Unconventional Warfare. Special Forces soldiers are ideally suited to work in environments where psychological tactics have considerable potential for deciding the outcome of operations.

### **The Role of US Army SF in Guerrilla Warfare**

During guerrilla warfare, SF operational detachments train, advise, and assist foreign military, paramilitary, or surrogate forces (guerrilla) in order to overthrow a constituted government through the use of subversion, sabotage, and armed conflict. History shows that effective

guerrilla core leadership must be indigenous. It is the guerrillas who serve as the combative arm of an insurgency. The supporting advisors' ability to gain immediate and long-term influence of a guerrilla force is partially dependent upon the SF operational detachments' (SFOD) ability to communicate effectively. To advise and assist, the SFODs speak the indigenous language and understand the attitudes, culture, social mores, racial psychology, political issues, history, and characteristics of the local populace and its government.

The SFOD must also influence the decision-making process of the guerrilla force and its associated infrastructure, which includes, but is not limited to, the underground support auxiliary and the resistance. The guerrillas act as the combative element of a resistance movement.

The most critical task for the development and growth of a guerrilla force is the psychological preparation and manipulation of the populace to support the guerrillas. The second most critical task is to recruit, retain, and motivate the guerrilla force to stay the course of the operation. All successful insurgencies have been carried

out by a dedicated, well-motivated guerrilla force supported by a populace that believes in the end state and shares the guerrillas' cause.

A US Special Forces sponsored guerrilla war is generally organized into the following seven phases:

- Phase I. Psychological preparation of the Unconventional Warfare Operational Area (UWOA)
- Phase II. Initial contact
- Phase III. Infiltration
- Phase IV. Organization
- Phase V. Build-up
- Phase VI. Combat employment
- Phase VII. Demobilization

To demonstrate how indigenous guerrillas are influenced to act as combat multipliers, let us consider how the psychological aspects of guerrilla warfare are applicable to each of these phases.

#### **The Nature of Guerrilla Warfare**

Guerrilla operations are unconventional military or paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominately indigenous forces as

part of an insurgency.<sup>6</sup> Guerrilla combatants normally operate as an independent force.

Guerrilla warfare is an extreme political means to bring about social and political change. Guerrilla wars are won by military and political action, -the success of which depends largely on the attitudes and opinions of the populace. The guerrillas' prime targets are the hearts and minds of the populace, the governments' armed forces, and the governments' infrastructure.

Guerrilla operations are conducted to harass, hinder, or destroy the nation's ability to protect its national resources and systems. These operations may disrupt government lines of communications or destroy logistic resources. Guerrilla action is normally undertaken as a result of a nation-state's demonstrated inability to meet the basic needs of the populace or its incompatibility with or indifference towards the peoples social, economic, religious or political needs or interests.

A nation-state is ripe for a guerrilla war or insurgency when the populace becomes increasingly discontent with the actions of their government and begins to offer active or passive resistance. In many cases, the discontent

begins in remote areas and gradually spreads into the capital or major city areas.<sup>7</sup> Such discontent may result from perceived government wrongs (abuses of power or human rights) which may affect lifestyles or economic survival in rural areas. Once such discontent spreads and emerges in organized groups (villages, religious sects, or along racial lines), the movement will begin to attract zealots along with the disgruntled and adventurers.

#### **The Role of Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare**

In all phases of guerrilla warfare, psychological operations plays a critical, but, complementary, role. To strengthen the effectiveness of their movement and gain the support and loyalty of the populace, the advisors teach the guerrillas to employ psychological operations to modify selected behaviors. PSYOP, imaginatively applied in a manner consistent with the psychological principles and techniques outlined in this study, offers a very efficient combat multiplier. Psychological operations increase doubt and suspicion of the established government, encouraging more and more resistance to government policies. PSYOP also

plays the key role in persuading the populace of the legitimacy of the guerrilla actions.

PSYOP provides a means to exploit the established government's political, economic, and military vulnerabilities. PSYOP attempts to influence targeted audiences to modify their behavior to favor the position of the insurgent. Using appropriate psychological tactics, the guerrillas justify their national objectives and goals to the target audience.

Psychological operations support the guerrilla force by spreading their messages in the form of radio/TV broadcasts, leaflets, posters, guerrilla-sponsored graffiti, and rumor. Leaflets surreptitiously passed out by hand in the Philippines, Korea, and Malaysia proved to be more effective than those air-dropped in mass. Hand delivered leaflets were read and remembered; such personally transmitted leaflets inspired a degree of trust, honor, and privilege among the populace.<sup>8</sup> Another valuable PSYOP tool is clandestine radio. It is used to disseminate the guerrilla's message to a wide audience that may be illiterate or geographically remote. These psychological

products are designed to influence a target audience at the strategic and operational or tactical levels of operations.

US Army PSYOP units have the authority to plan and execute psychological actions in support of each theater Commander-In-Chief (CINC). The PSYOP element produces a campaign plan in support of US national objectives within the UWOA and theater to prepare the UWOA for the arrival of the US Army SF detachment in Phase I. Using psychological principles of persuasion, psychological operations also provides an additional force multiplier in guerrilla warfare.

#### **Manipulating Human Behavior in Guerrilla Warfare**

Guerrilla warfare cannot succeed if it is waged on pure military terms, since the guerrillas are inevitably outgunned. Guerrillas must also wage war in a psychological dimension. Mao Tse Tung emphasized the importance of motivating the guerrilla. His concern with human behavior permeates his writings.<sup>9</sup>

The guerrilla's psychological goal is to gain and maintain the support of the populace.<sup>10</sup> Recruiting, motivating, and sustaining each guerrilla individually and

the force collectively becomes the guerrilla leader's next highest priority. The manipulative behavioral techniques and procedures described below, if correctly applied, achieve these goals.

**Phase I: Psychological Preparation of the Unconventional Warfare Operational Area.**

The initial psychological action used during the preparation of the UWOA is provided by legitimate support from an external sponsor. When the SF advisor infiltrates the UWOA to assist and advise the organization, build-up and execution of subsequent combat operations, the guerrilla leadership must convince his followers that the external assistance serves as recognition of the legitimacy of their cause. The SF advisors emphasize that the sponsoring nation wants to assist a righteous fledgling force to restore the nation to its people. The guerrilla's ultimate success is linked to establishment of a new government; so, first of all, the guerrillas must believe in the righteousness of their cause. This belief is strengthened by their awareness that another established government supports their cause.

However, in order for any guerrilla movement to be successful in the initial stage, it must gain and maintain the support of the populace. In this phase, guerrillas must be inclined to accept external assistance and advice. In addition, the guerrillas identify key communicators and select target audiences for later operations of influence. Believing in their cause, the guerrillas are now prepared to convince the populace of the righteousness of this cause.

**Phase II: Initial Contact and Phase III: Infiltration**

These phases are nearly executed simultaneously. The psychological aspects of each phase are very similar. During these phases, comprehension of the principles of human behavior manipulation enable the SF advisors from the sponsoring nation to identify, isolate, target, and tactically manipulate the guerrilla movement's leadership. To effectively advise the guerrilla leadership, advisors must establish an effective personal relationship. Rapport with the guerrilla's leadership is critical.

Advisors initially focus on security, assessment of the organization, and degree of psychological support required by the resistance forces. The SF advisors must

rapidly assess the strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities of the organization and its effectiveness.

Special Forces officers are formally trained in techniques to establish rapport and trust with guerrilla leaders. In essence, the advisors must use interpersonal communications to influence the guerrilla leader's behavior. Often, the degree of rapport created with a counterpart is directly proportionate to the officer's ability to influence his counterpart's behavior to take actions consistent with the advisor's requirements.

SF advisors must be masters of subtle suggestion. A direct verbal approach usually produces resistance, often in the form of antagonism and humiliation. Yet the power of suggestion is a viable technique in face-to-face communications. Communist leaders in Vietnam clearly stressed the importance of interpersonal persuasive communication; a communist doctrine urged the cadre(advisors) to "mingle with the people as water mixed with flour to bring about a consistent rising."<sup>11</sup>

Repetition of suggestions at intervals, with the most desired behavior mentioned last, dramatically increases the probability of that suggestion being acted upon.

Psychologically, the last statement made is the one most likely to be acted upon. However, since youth are more inclined to follow a suggestion than are elders, it is best that age groups be separated. Effective application of psychological principles to establish rapport is dependent upon a thorough understanding of the traits that are unique to the guerrilla leadership. Rapport is a by-product of psychological judgment and sensitivity. Empathy often develops from respect as a by-product of keen and patient observation.<sup>12</sup> The advisor's degree of success or failure in manipulating the guerrilla leadership may be based upon the degree or style of assertiveness demonstrated by the advisor.

#### **Phase IV: Organization**

The primary goal during this phase is to increase the size and effectiveness of the guerrilla force through recruiting and training new recruits with appropriate ideological sympathies. Psychological operations are expanded to influence peasants, rural populations, the middle class, army enlisted personnel, and farmers. By this time, the insurgent guerrilla forces have trained sufficiently to

conduct effective operations. Successes are publicized, and the guerrilla leaders are portrayed as omniscient. The guerrillas become associated with special symbols and names of the movement. For instance, in Vietnam the Viet Cong used a Viet Cong flag and a picture of Ho Chi Minh in their ceremonies to represent authority<sup>13</sup> which resulted in respected, even revered leadership.

Psychological operations stress themes of inevitability; they instill fear and doubt within government armed forces. The guerrillas win by not losing. Also, the armed forces are targeted with messages which promise consequences of death or crippling wounds. These often repeated messages and images create more apprehension, distrust, and doubt among the government's enlisted soldiers.

#### **The Psychological Value of Symbology**

In Saigon, Vietnam, in 1963, the Buddhist monks who immolated themselves by burning became living symbols of the resistance.<sup>14</sup> The use of such symbols is a type of passive resistance. Often these symbols call attention to the brutality and oppressiveness of the government. Moreover,

they convince the populace that the more righteous resisters will make any sacrifice, including a painful death, to discredit or overthrow the unjust government. These martyrs then make the populace "feel guilty" about not supporting the guerrilla's cause. The guerrilla forces' use of a symbol provides another psychological anchor, which represents their sense of belonging to a special and elite organization. The symbol itself enhances the unity of the group and acts as a rallying icon.

The weapons of the guerrilla are a natural symbol. They should use their weapons as a symbol of their fight to protect and defend the citizens. Since most poor rural peasants and nearly every teenager are curious about weapons, the guerrillas can use this curiosity to their advantage. The citizens are taught how to safely handle and use the weapons in a "self defense role." The citizen slowly begins to identify with the weapons carried by the guerrillas and understands that the weapons are used for protection "against threats by the incumbent government." Then guerrilla weapons given to the citizens are perceived as affording the people with protection against their common enemy, "the government."

The brazen use of symbols associated with the proportionate successes of the guerrilla movement serves to create a sense of fear in government forces. The effect shows the omnipotence of the guerrilla movement (its all-powerful presence everywhere), while publicly demonstrating the inability of the government forces to control or prevent the actions taken by the guerrilla force. Marking these symbols on walls or on government buildings provides an active sign of resistance. Such advertising creates the impression that the guerrilla movement is much more widespread and popular than it may actually be.

In the Vietnam War, fear of US Armed Forces units was spread in the form of a leaflet "calling card." The ace of spades was printed as a symbol of death on the cards. These "calling cards" were attached to enemy bodies to instill a sense of fear in the enemy and to attest to the "deadly effectiveness" of the American military forces.<sup>15</sup>

In the U.S. today gangs have adopted very effective methods of group identification. These techniques range from strikingly colored clothes and "gang speak" to the use of artistic applications of graffiti to mark their territory and communicate their intent.

### **The Psychology of War Names**

At the beginning of combat operations, the guerrilla (if identified) may be intimidated or demoralized by the established government's threat of retaliation against his or her family. To afford the guerrilla confidence that his or her identity is protected, the advisors may recommend that each guerrilla should be provided with a guerrilla "nom de guerre" (war name). The war name may be that of an animal ("el tigre") or a nickname which recognizes a unique "pioneer" skill identifier. Such names enhance the "macho" image of the guerrilla while protecting his identity. In addition, the anonymity of a pseudonym provides a psychological anchor and bonding of the individual to the guerrilla movement. The war name protects his family while providing a bond with the movement.

### **Phase V: Build-up and Gaining Popular Support**

The most important psychological goal during this phase is to gain and maintain popular support, once the guerrilla force has been built and has begun conspicuous resistance operations. The advisors instruct the guerrilla leadership

about how to gain and maintain the support of the populace; they are competing with an established government for the support of the same populace. The average citizen quickly learns that he must answer to two masters. The government places restrictions on his everyday lifestyle by day, and the guerrilla makes demands by night. The guerrillas ask for logistical support, weapons, intelligence, and new recruits. This stress creates an emotional environment of constant fear among the populace. The citizen may attempt to find the path of least resistance, or he may chose to support one side or the other. Undecided citizens also become the guerrilla's targets. Some people will support the guerrillas through financial contributions, but not through verbal support.

The goal of the guerrilla movement should be to create the impression that there is widespread popular support for the guerrilla's cause. Guerrillas must convince neutrals either not to resist or to support the guerrillas' cause. By creating sympathy for their cause, the guerrillas enjoy passive support. Still, guerrillas must strengthen this support until their followers become disciples in word and deed. For example, Belgium citizens provided support to the

underground resistance in opposition to German occupation forces during World War II. Passive sympathizers of the guerrilla movement contributed by noncooperation. Workers in shipping departments in factories incorrectly addressed shipments and conveniently "forgot" to enclose all the items.<sup>16</sup>

Mao Tse-Tung fully understood the requirement for support from the populace. He established a famous analogy which compares the "fish in the sea" to the guerrillas interaction with the people.<sup>17</sup> The fish represent the guerrillas who cannot survive without the food and shelter of the sea (the people). In 1926, Mao Tse Tung also introduced two slogans as he trained recruits in guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. These axioms reflect the psychological importance of face-to-face communications:

1. Engage in propaganda wherever we go: Spread the revolutionary policy far and wide.
2. Adopt a courteous attitude when talking with anyone. We should never lose our temper or quarrel with anyone.<sup>18</sup>

Through patient, persistent "suggestion," the guerrilla is taught to manipulate the people using psychological

techniques and procedures to gain the people's trust, thereby creating acceptance of the guerrilla and his objectives.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the most effective relationships established between the guerrilla movement and the people come through face-to-face communications. This traditional technique enables the guerrilla to instill his causes and goals into the hearts and minds of the people. In short, the guerrilla communicates in terms most familiar and easily understood by the people. These methods create a perception among the people that the guerrilla is "from the people" and "for the people." Now, the guerrilla's goals become the peoples' goals. Once the people have virtually assimilated these goals, the guerrilla's cause is nearly won.

In the early organizational phase of guerrilla warfare, a large portion of the populace may be opposed to the resistance effort. They may have fear and uncertainty about the ways, means, ends, and potential for the success of the guerrilla movement. No one wants to be on the side of the loser in the ensuing struggle. The loser will suffer punishments and sanctions, which may occur swiftly and brutally. On the other hand, a newly established government

may not offer amnesty to the previous governmental officials and employees. To insure that the new government's goals and objectives are understood, the people must be educated to accept the inevitability of a guerrilla victory. They should be educated to trust the new established order and not be uncertain as to its future. This process further allows the populace to accept the guerrillas' goals as their own. The tide thus turns in favor of the insurgency.

The guerrilla must also recognize that his every act creates a psychological impression of the guerrilla movement. So every action taken by the guerrilla must insure that the people can relate to his purpose and must inspire confidence in the judgment and capabilities of the guerrillas. The guerrilla should employ a key psychological technique to sway those in the populace that may be either pro-government or neutral to the resistance. The use of key communicators is a psychologically proven manipulative tool. Key communicators are those individuals within a target audience to whom other members of that audience turn most frequently for information, opinion, or interpretation of information. This individual may be a priest, mayor, teacher, village chief, or community leader. In different

cultures, key communicators may be identified by age, birth, education, political authority, religion, wealth, exceptional talent, rhetorical skills, or physical strength. The guerrilla must persuade the key communicator with a viable, believable message. He or she may be first to accept the guerrilla's message. Once the key communicator is won to the cause, he or she can be released to a larger audience.

Several fundamental themes may be used to further develop popular support for the guerrilla cause. These themes stress identity by family names that citizens who support the established government are "collaborators" who are working against their own people. Such derogatory designations imply that these citizens are not loyal. They are then perceived as greedy and out to consolidate their power and wealth against their fellow countrymen. The psychological effect of such labeling "exposes" the traitors for what they are and further discredits them. At the same time, such ostracism forces those supporting the established government to question the nature of the government's position.

Some guerrilla movements have failed not because they did not recognize the necessity for popular support, but because they were unable to polarize the populace to gain their support. Others failed even though they recognized this factor, but they violated other principles of security. Consider the example of Cuban revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia, 1968. Che Guevara was a Cuban medical doctor who studied and practiced Marxist revolutions. Che entered Bolivia in 1966 to export revolution to the rural areas of Bolivia.<sup>20</sup> An outsider, Che never gained the support of the populace. However, his ultimate demise resulted from a tactical blunder. Che and his guerrillas chose to establish a base camp in a dead-end canyon, Churo ravine, where he was surrounded by the Bolivian Army with no escape routes.<sup>21</sup> Che and several of his guerrillas were killed in the ensuing firefight because Che had violated the principle of physical security. Mastery of psychological principles is worth little if the advisors allow the guerrilla leaders to make significant tactical errors. Psychological operations cannot compensate for poor tactics, techniques and procedures.

Provocation is also a psychologically manipulative tool. If the guerrillas can provoke the government to respond to its actions at distant logistically insupportable locations, the government must commit vast resources over huge geographic areas in an attempt to counter the guerrilla's action. Thus, the government slowly overextends its limited resources to counter a small, mostly insignificant guerrilla presence.

The guerrilla may also carefully orchestrate the news media to lend creditability to its cause. Guerrilla leaders seek to give the impression that the guerrilla movement is receiving vast amounts of international political support. This impression is created by the international news media, which lends creditability through recognition of the guerrilla movement.

With the advice and assistance of the advisors, the guerrillas should also sponsor an increased frequency of graffiti, posters, and handbills in remote areas of the country where there are no guerrilla base camps in order to further deceive the government forces about the actual locations of base camps. This has the effect of spreading the government's forces and logistical requirements out into

an even larger area, further from the critical targets selected by the guerrilla for ultimate control or destruction. This reinforces the perception of the populace that government forces are vastly ineffective.

If the guerrilla is successful, the government may be provoked into taking reprisals against the populace. The guerrilla force may be able to capture such events on video. Videos could then be released to the international media to demonstrate the unfairness and inhumaneness of the government's action, thus creating additional sympathy for the guerrilla movement in the international arena.

The advisors emphasize these strategies in waging this type of manipulative action. The guerrillas appear to be a numerically inferior armed paramilitary force, whose cause is supported by a populace. The guerrillas further a cause in conflict with government forces using tactics, techniques, and procedures that are exceedingly difficult to successfully counter. As a result, the guerrilla forces the government to conduct counter guerrilla operations which further alienate the populace from the government by the establishment of travel restrictions or roadblocks or searches directed at the populace.

As the populace's behavior is modified and influenced by these manipulative techniques and methods, handbills and leaflets stress that the people and the guerrilla share the same social and political objectives. Now, psychologically, the populace have identified with the guerrilla on both the social and the political dimensions, thus increasing popular support.

Other psychological manipulation techniques may be employed in this phase to lend creditability to and to enhance the psychological image of the guerrilla. The use of rumors disseminated by key communicators can be a very effective and creditable tool. To reinforce the creditability of a rumor, the guerrilla spreads it to several different target audiences or in geographically remote, but adjoining areas. Subsequent communications between individuals from different areas lends creditability to the rumor. Since the rumor will have a basis in fact and will later come true, fulfilled rumors eventually lend additional creditability to the guerrilla. This strengthens and enhances the image of the guerrilla force in the eyes of the populace and the established government.

To further publicize its cause, the guerrilla may plan an operation to take over a radio station for a very brief time. The leadership should broadcast a short, but inspirational speech. This action should only take place once. A charismatic guerrilla leader should deliver the inspirational message.

#### **Motivation and Behavior of the Guerrilla**

The second most important goal of conducting a guerrilla war is the motivation and retention of the individual guerrilla. Once a guerrilla has been recruited into the movement, he must feel compelled to stay, even though the life of a guerrilla is fraught with hardships. The constant stress brought on by inadequate shelter, food, equipment and medical care creates a Spartan environment so the guerrilla is certain to recall his previous more practical existence under the government's control. The guerrilla may feel that these hardships are too high a price to pay for free land or shared enterprises after the revolution is won.

After an individual is functioning inside the guerrilla movement, he becomes exposed to a new life style which may

be quite different from his or her expectations. An analysis of the defections from the Huk insurgency in the Philippines discloses that 61% defected because of physical hardships such as cold, hunger, and lack of sleep.<sup>22</sup>

A similar situation occurred in the Republic of Vietnam. In January 1963, President Ngo Dinh Diem started the "Chieu-Hoi program. Viet Cong defectors were offered amnesty. As a result, in a 1965 study of 1,369 men and women who defected, most cited as reasons for defection the harshness of the guerrilla life, especially food shortages and lack of medical supplies.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, a guerrilla forms new bonds and friendships. He or she assumes responsibilities that psychologically bond the individual to the group. Ultimately, the guerrilla's indoctrination and motivation influences him or her to remain in the unit. This new commitment is based upon the guerrilla's belief that his or her participation in the guerrilla movement will eventually bring about a better lifestyle for himself, his family, his village, and the populace.

Surprisingly enough, some studies reflect that a number of the guerrillas do not remain simply because they believe

in the cause. A case study of captured Vietminh in Viet Nam reflected that 38% of the prisoners believed in the Vietminh cause, yet only 17% of a 400 Huk prisoner sample in the Philippines expressed sympathy with the Communist Party.<sup>24</sup> Studies have shown that the soldier's actual motivation to endure the high risks of combat are not based upon the reasons cited above nor in the quest of valor. The actual reasons reflected a concern for his fellow soldier and a general concern for what the individual envisioned that his peers thought of him. These same bonding principles may exist in guerrilla units. The guerrilla may continue to fight out of loyalty to his fellow guerrillas so as not to disappoint them. Finally, ideology seems to play a significant, but secondary role.

The image of the guerrilla leader and the guerrillas plays a key role in recruiting, motivating, and establishing cohesion and morale within the guerrilla movement and in building popular support within the populace. The advisors psychological goal is to make the guerrilla leader's image/reputation stronger and more viable than it is. The image of the guerrilla movement (mascot, symbol or color) creates a strong bond of belonging (unity) or solidarity and

provides an image the guerrillas relate to. The gang/club psychological bond also contributes to the bonding of the guerrilla to the guerrilla movement. In Southeast Asia, power and status within an organization carries great importance to an individual.<sup>25</sup>

#### **Phase VI: Combat Employment**

In the combat operations phase of the guerrilla movement, the advisors focus on the publicity of the tactical and operational successes while at the same time publicizing the established government's retributions against the populace. The guerrillas must attempt to present their image as well-armed, all powerful, and capable of controlling territory. They broadcast identified weaknesses of government forces to demonstrate the ineptness of those forces.

When an insurgency grows in size, the type of individual it attracts begins to change. In the Phase IV (organization phase), individuals were carefully nominated, selected, screened and tested for their leadership potential and degree of motivation.<sup>26</sup> Several individuals are recruited specially for their ideological motivation to

exert an inspirational influence on new recruits. Normally, these individuals require little motivation to sustain their membership in the cause and have dynamic personalities.

As the movement becomes more military in nature (Phase IV, Organization), the organization expands. During this phase, the reasons for joining become complex. Many recruits volunteer because of personal problems or to satisfy immediate needs. For instance, a depressed individual may feel that his or her life has no meaning. Human beings dislike ambiguity and uncertainty in their social environment and seek to give meaning and cause to their activities.<sup>27</sup> Joining a group often provides an identity, satisfying the need to belong. This, in turn, provides a strong boost of self esteem.<sup>28</sup>

Some criminal elements may join to avoid the government's persecution, while others may be influenced to join because their friends or family are serving. A few individuals may join simply out of coercion.

A study of the Huk Philippine insurgency (1946-1954) reflects that individuals joined not for a single reason, but for a combination of factors. Some joined to obtain a personal advantage, such as ownership of land or a position

of authority. Family discord also influenced many to join.<sup>29</sup>

### **Guerrilla Morale Sustainment**

In order to keep the guerrillas motivated to perform under austere and difficult conditions, elaborate techniques have been used by communist revolutionary movements. In Vietnam, the Viet Cong went to extreme measures to recover their dead soldiers from the battlefield for burial, with traditional rituals and ceremonies. As a result, the Viet Cong soldier perceived that the leadership of the unit cared about each soldier enough to risk others in battle to insure that each soldier received a burial.

The communist revolutions used another technique to sustain morale of the unit. The leadership held frequent meetings to focus on self-criticism. In actuality, these meetings encouraged catharsis. The purpose was to allow each member the opportunity to verbalize their own opinion regarding their emotions, shortcomings and fears. Psychologically, the Viet Cong soldier stripped naked and exposed himself while vowing to improve. The communist logic was that through criticism, one can correct one's

faults. The soldier, who openly "confessed" his fears, frustrations, and short-comings was now much more highly motivated as his peers heard his resolution testimonial style.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the guerrillas believed that their leadership cared about their opinions. The process also served as a therapeutic outlet, which probably precluded defections and desertions. This technique of self-criticism should not be confused with other armed forces, tactic of constructive criticism, which often results in humor and encouragement.

Many guerrilla/terrorist groups have likewise effectively used fear as an instrument to insure the individual's loyalty. Once inside a guerrilla movement, most members are sworn under oath to remain a member of the unit under penalty of death. Such oaths serve to impress upon the new recruit the deadly seriousness of their job and to reinforce the need for secrecy.<sup>31</sup> In the event of a transgression by a new recruit, the individual or his immediate family would become the victim of an atrocity carried out by the guerrillas or an element of the resistance. The facts of the atrocity were then quietly circulated among the members to insure future compliance,

which created an atmosphere of fear and reprisal. But it also tends to establish a strict code of conduct, where the individual guerrilla becomes hyperconscious of the consequence of his failures or betrayals of the cause. This retribution tactic has extreme ethical and legal implications which create secondary effects that are usually counter-productive, criminal, and may form long-term negative implications for the sponsor.

#### **Phase VII: Demobilization**

Perhaps the most important psychological environment that the guerrilla must create is one that prepares the guerrilla and the populace for the last phase of guerrilla warfare: demobilization. This phase is characterized by the disarmament, of the guerrilla force, which is now transformed into standing regular armed forces. National systems are revitalized; the populace is encouraged to cooperate with the new government. The need for an orderly turnover, relocation and settlement of displaced persons, and the role of a fair and just administration to establish the national systems are stressed. Advisors must stress the importance of turning over the government to the people for

self-rule. It is critical that the turnover should occur with ceremony.

Once the guerrilla element, with the resistance, has attained the consolidation of the national systems and control of the government, the populace must be convinced to believe that the transition to a new form of government occurs through the disbanding or reorganization of the guerrillas. Having already demonstrated their trust and confidence in the guerrillas, this confidence must be continually reinforced by a highly visible ceremony of the disarmament process or swearing of allegiance to the new government. The guerrilla force must either disband or reemerge as the established armed force of the restored or new government. The insurgency has been successfully completed.

#### **Recommendations**

The use of manipulative human behavior techniques and procedures has proven effective in the conduct of guerrilla warfare. These techniques are a critical aspect of successful guerrilla warfare, and can be integrated by US Army SF advisors as a combat multiplier. Finally, the

tactics, techniques, and procedures discussed in this paper should be considered for inclusion in U.S. Army Special Operations Field Manuals and Special Texts.

### **Conclusions**

The manipulation of human behavior to win and sustain popular support of a populace, while retaining the combat potential of a guerrilla force through motivation processes, results in an effective combat multiplier.

Documented and embedded in over thirty years of Special Forces guerrilla warfare experience, documented by case studies, are various types of tested and proven human behavior manipulation techniques. The most effective techniques have been distilled in this study and are recommended for use in future guerrilla warfare operations by those Special Forces soldiers fighting to "De Oppresso Libre."

## Endnotes

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